

A look at the Basa Awards with Ashraf Johaardien



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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On the eve of the Business and Arts South Africa (Basa) Awards, we chat to Basa CEO, Ashraf Johaardien.



Business and Arts South Africa (Basa) CEO, Ashraf Johaardien. Image supplied

Johaardien's career in the creative sector encompasses a range of professional roles across a spectrum of disciplines. They have been professionally associated with a number of major South African cultural and academic institutions including, the National Arts Festival and Cape Town Fringe (executive producer), the Baxter Theatre (development manager), Wits University (general manager) and the University of Johannesburg (head of Arts).

They joined Basa as CEO in 2019 and during their tenure, the organisation has raised over R120m for the creative sector. In addition, to date arts projects funded by Basa's Supporting Grants programme have leveraged in excess of R590m in sponsorship from the business sector.

■ ***What is the mission of Business and Arts South Africa (Basa)?***

Basa champions the development of the creative sector by building capacity, enhancing commercial confidence and growing future leaders and cultural advocates.

■ ***What are some of the key objectives and activities of Basa?***

Partnership are core to our work. The creative sector can't grow in a vacuum; it's part of a broader ecosystem and to ensure it isn't siloed and stymied, it needs partners across government, business and the public sector.

After all, culture is a co-created experience; it's who we are as a people, what we put out into the world, our stories. Basa unlocks and unblocks opportunities for this ecosystem to grow.

This happens through our supporting grants, by recognising business and arts partnerships through the Basa Awards, and through helping partners unpack the partnership journey for cross-sector partners. We also run multiple projects and programmes that grow leadership and entrepreneurial skills in the creative sector. And of course, we connect the public to opportunities, to engage with and enjoy the arts.

■ ***How does the creative economy contribute to economic growth and development?***

The creative economy is a massive opportunity to create employment and entrepreneurship in South Africa – at speed. The barriers to entry are comparatively low. What we are missing are the skills that equip creatives to make a business from their art, and opportunities for these talents to thrive. Not only is creative work a form of healing and healthy expression, but as the world turns to Africa for new creative ideas, there has never been a better time to invest in creativity.



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■ **How does Basa promote collaboration between businesses and the arts sector?**

The business sector can offer the creative sector a platform to make work, influence narratives, and to shape the cultural discourse. Many businesses are also working with the creative sector on their CSI projects and these projects have significant social impact. Artists bring fresh thinking and processes to the business world. As work changes and we head into what will hopefully be a more purpose-minded era, creativity, and creative thinking have become increasingly valuable contributions.

■ **What is the purpose of the annual Basa Awards?**

The Basa Awards not only celebrates the achievements of businesses and creatives who have done great things together, it also shines a light on what has worked. These case studies are a good departure point for businesses and creatives to examine, especially with regards to working together in future.

■ **What can we expect at this year's Awards?**

This is the first time the Awards are being held in Cape Town, and we are very excited that we will be celebrating our winners at the awe-inspiring Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art. Our guests will also experience a very special moment as the Basa featured artist, Gregory Maqoma, will perform at the ceremony on the eve of his retirement from the stage. As an organisation, Basa is also celebrating a new look and new logo, which we will unveil at the event.



The creative genius of Gregory Maqoma honoured as 2023 Basa Awards featured artist

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■ **How can artists and cultural organisations get involved with Basa and seek support?**

There are multiple ways to engage with Basa. The first stop would be to follow our social media channels [Business and Arts South Africa](#) on Facebook and https://www.instagram.com/bizart_za/ on Instagram, as well as our Twitter feed [@Basa_news](#).

This is where we publish all the opportunities, upcoming programmes and experiences. Businesses and creatives can also become Basa members with a host of benefits that include access to industry research, networking opportunities, invitations to events and first notice of opportunities.

Please visit our membership helper on <https://Basa.co.za/membership/> or explore our website at www.Basa.co.za.

Be part of the excitement by registering to join the Basa Awards virtually on 13 October 2023! Register at <https://bit.ly/45hYGgK> to secure your virtual seat now and witness the magic from wherever you are!

Bizcommunity is a proud media partner to the 26th Basa Awards recognising mutually beneficial arts and business partnerships and the impact business can have on the arts in South Africa.

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